



BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

BY GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR



CRAIG BIEHLE

Spring Light Goose Season Opens

North Dakota's spring light goose season opens February 18.

Snow geese tend to move through the state fairly quickly in spring, with arrival and departure depending on the weather. Snow geese typically migrate through the state the last two weeks in March and the first week in April.

Species identification is important because white-fronted and Canada geese travel with light geese. The season is closed to white-fronts, Canada geese, swans and all other migratory birds.

Licensing information and regulations are available on the Department website at gf.nd.gov, or by calling 701-328-6300. The 2005-06 hunting license is still valid for residents, but new Harvest Information Program certification is required. Call 888-634-4798 to register, or visit the Game and Fish website.

Migration Hotline: 701-328-3697

Mountain Lion Season Closes Early

A predetermined quota of five mountain lions was reached in mid-January, closing North Dakota's first open season in modern times.

The fifth and final lion, a young female, was taken January 15 northwest of Grassy Butte in western North Dakota. All five cats were taken in the northern badlands during the season that opened September 2.

The first two cats were shot in mid-November. One was a juvenile male, the other an adult female that had not yet had a litter. The third lion, an adult male, was killed on December 31.

The fourth lion was a 2-year-old male and weighed 111 pounds. It was taken January 6.

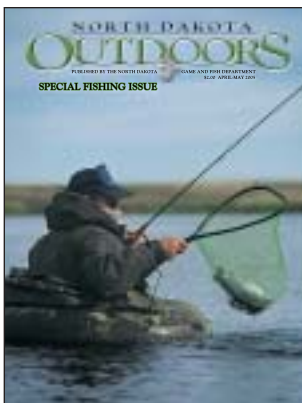
Information gathered from the harvested animals, will help Game and Fish better manage mountain lions in the future. "This experimental season has revealed that, while we get reports of mountain lion sightings statewide, their presence is greater in western North Dakota," said Dorothy Fecske, Game and Fish furbearer biologist. "It's another piece of the puzzle to help us understand the population."

Spring Turkey Deadline Nears

The application deadline for a 2006 spring turkey license is February 15. Prospective gobbler hunters can apply online at the Game and Fish website at gf.nd.gov, or by phone at 800-406-6409. Online or phone applications must be logged by 11:59 p.m. that day.

Applications are also available at most license vendors, county auditors and Game and Fish offices. Spring turkey licenses are available only to North Dakota residents. An \$8 fee must accompany the application. The season opens April 8.

NEW *OUTDOORS* PUBLISHING SCHEDULE



To Our Valued Readers:

Starting next month *North Dakota OUTDOORS* will begin a slightly new publishing schedule to better serve our readers.

Instead of an April-May spring fishing issue, we will now have a March-April fishing issue that will come out the last part of March. May will then become a regular monthly issue.

Toward fall, we will combine the August and September magazines as a fall hunting issue that will arrive in late August. October will become a regular single issue. All other monthly issues will remain the same.

The only difference you will notice is that the March and August issue will arrive about 3 weeks later than has previously been the case. Plus, we will now have single issues in May and October that will allow for greater coverage of a variety of spring and fall topics.

Editor

Tentative 2006 Season Opening Dates

To help hunters prepare for the 2006 hunting seasons, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department annually provides its best estimate for opening dates for the coming year.

Dates are not official until approved by governor's proclamation. Tentative opening dates for 2006 include:

Season	Opening Dates
Spring Light Goose	February 18
Spring Crow	March 18
Spring Turkey	April 8
Paddlefish Snagging	May 1
Fall Crow	August 12
Deer and Pronghorn Bow, Mourning Dove	
Early Canada Goose	September 1
Sharptail, Hun, Ruffed Grouse, Squirrel	September 9
Youth Deer	September 15
Sandhill Crane	September 16
Ducks, Goose, Swan	September 30
Pronghorn Gun	October 6
Pheasant, Fall Turkey	October 14
Mink, Muskrat, Weasel Trapping	October 21
Deer Gun	November 10
Deer Muzzle-loader	December 1

Wildlife Wednesdays Back

North Dakota Game and Fish Department outreach biologists will present wildlife and conservation-related talks each Wednesday night through much of March.

The presentations, held at the Department's Bismarck headquarters, will begin at 7 p.m. and last about 90 minutes.

Written materials and handouts will be available. For more information call the Department's outreach section at 328-6615.

The schedule looks like this:

- February 15 – Furbearers of North Dakota.
- February 22 – Raptors of North Dakota.
- March 1 – Trees and Shrubs for Wildlife.
- March 8 – Waterfowl Identification.
- March 15 – Catching, Cleaning and Preparing Northern Pike.
- March 22 – Mountain Lions in North Dakota.

More Nonresident Any-Deer Bow Licenses

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department will have 1,155 any-deer bow licenses available to nonresidents in 2006, up from 956 in 2005.

The number of nonresident any-deer bow licenses available is 15 percent of the previous year's mule deer gun license allocation. Game and Fish issued 7,700 mule deer licenses in the 2005 deer gun lottery.

The Department will begin issuing any-deer bow licenses March 1. All applications received on or before March 1, 2006, will be treated equally. If Game and Fish receives more applications than licenses, a drawing will be held.

If licenses remain after March 1, these will be issued daily on a first-come, first-served basis.

Moose, Elk and Bighorn Sheep Deadline

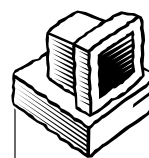
Applications for this fall's bighorn sheep, elk and moose hunting seasons must be in the mail and postmarked before midnight March 22.

Prospective hunters can print out, or submit a lottery application online on the Game and Fish Department's website at gf.nd.gov, starting approximately March 6. Applications will also be available at Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Individuals mailing applications to the Department are advised to mail early because some post offices use the following day's postmark for mail received after regular hours. The Department's online application feature will be deactivated March 22 at midnight.



Tentative season opening dates give hunters plenty of time to plan upcoming trips afield.



INSTANT LICENSING

Online at gf.nd.gov

Over the phone at **800-406-6409**

Most types of Game and Fish licenses and applications are now available both online at the Department's website, or over the phone. Online license purchases have no surcharge, while instant licensing over the phone carries a service charge of \$4 for transactions of \$70 or less, and \$10 if the cost is more than \$70.





Warden Mark Pollert

WARDEN STORIES

Off Duty?

By Mark Pollert

Most game wardens like to hunt and fish on their days off. It's not unusual, however,

to go from "off" to "on" when we witness one of our fellow participants abusing North Dakota's resources.

A couple of winters ago on a weekend day off, I was walking across a snow-covered field toward a large slough. Camouflaged in white, my plan was to sit down on the edge of the cattails and try calling in a coyote or fox.

During the walk, I heard what sounded like a snowmobile off in the distance.

When I reached the edge of the slough, I saw a coyote trotting along the other side, probably a half-mile away – not a bad omen for the first stop of the day. I sat down and began calling.

At first the coyote moved slowly in my direction, but it seemed concerned, perhaps by the distant buzz from the snowmobile that I could still hear as well. The coyote came to within about a quarter mile, stalled and then turned around and trotted away.

I don't usually give up that quickly so I continued to call. After a couple more minutes a different coyote broke onto the ice and headed in the same direction as the first coyote. I pleaded with that coyote as best I could, but it didn't seem to slow his movement and he was getting farther away.

After seeing that it wasn't going to stop, I took aim. I'm not the world's greatest crack shot, so I was sort of surprised when the coyote spun around a couple of times and went down on the ice.

As I was walking toward the coyote, I heard the snowmobile again, and looked up just in time to see it crest a small hill in the direction from which the coyote had come.

The coyote, apparently not dead, struggled to get up at the sound of the

machine. I heard the snowmobile accelerate and watched in disbelief as it sped toward my coyote.

I began running, waving my arms and hollering but the snowmobile driver never saw me. (Apparently snow camo works very well.)

I was within 100 yards and still the snowmobiler attempted to run over my coyote at least twice. Not succeeding, he left the area, apparently still without noticing me.

A couple of minutes after I dispatched the coyote, the snowmobile reappeared, this time with two people aboard. Still appalled by what had happened, I jumped up and down and waved my arms, trying to attract their attention. To my surprise the snowmobile drove up to me. The passenger was carrying a gun.

The driver stopped and asked if the coyote was mine. I told him it was and that I was trying to dispatch it just before he tried running it over. He said he hadn't tried to run it over and I promptly reminded him that I was watching the whole thing.

He then recanted and agreed he had tried to run it over, but only because it appeared injured. However, I knew there was no doubt he planned to run it over whether it was injured or not.

After a couple minutes of reading him the riot act, I told him I was a game warden and that he was in some real trouble. His jaw nearly fell off.

I told the passenger to wait there while the driver and I went back to my pickup, so I could take down the information I needed to make a case.

Thousands of North Dakotans enjoy snowmobiling and game wardens issue very few citations for chasing or harassing wildlife. Usually we get reports of this type of activity second hand, but every once in awhile we get lucky and observe it in person. And it doesn't matter whether we have the day off, or not.



Check the Watchable Wildlife Checkoff

State Game and Fish Department outreach biologist Jeb Williams reminds North Dakota taxpayers to look for the Watchable Wildlife checkoff on the state tax form.

The 2005 state income tax form gives wildlife enthusiasts an opportunity to support nongame wildlife like songbirds and birds of prey, while at the same time contributing to programs that help everyone enjoy all wildlife.

Look for the Watchable Wildlife Fund checkoff on lines 33 or 37 of your state tax return. The checkoff is an easy way to voluntarily contribute part of your tax refund (line 33) to sustain this long-standing program. Or, if you have tax due, you can make a donation on line 37. In addition, direct donations to the program are accepted any time of year.

To learn more about Watchable Wildlife Program activities, or to request the 2006 poster, contact the Department at 328-6300; or write the Watchable Wildlife Program at 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095.

Editor's note: The individual in this case was cited for chasing/harassing a furbearer with a snowmobile, a class B misdemeanor, and paid a \$250 fine. Since January 2003 when this event took place, a new schedule of fines is in place and a similar violation would warrant a higher fine.



BOW Schedules Winter Workshops

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program still has openings for its winter workshop at Lake Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau, February 24, 25 and 26.

This weekend offers a variety of classes. A class on dog sledding is available all three days with a limit of six entrants per session. Basic snowshoeing and winter tracking, winter ecology and cross-country skiing, and ice fishing is available only February 25, with each class limited to 15 entrants.

Women interested in the workshops should register immediately due to limited space available. The cost is \$40 for one class or \$60 for two classes. Pre-registration with payment is required. Equipment and snacks will be provided.

Information and registration forms can be obtained by contacting Nancy Boldt, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095; 701-328-6312; or email ndgf@state.nd.us.

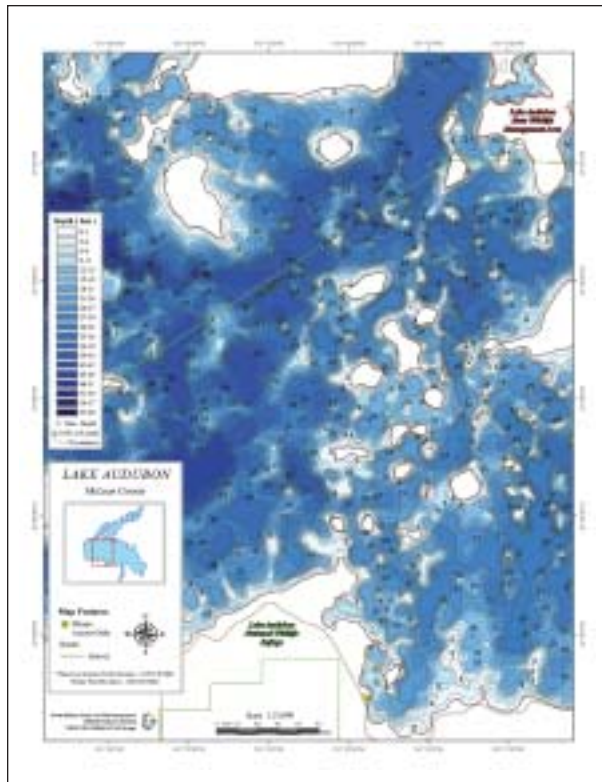
New Contour Lake Maps Available on Web

Lake Audubon in McLean County and Lake Josephine in Kidder County are now available as full color contour maps on the North Dakota Game and Fish Department website at gf.nd.gov.

More than 120 high-tech maps are featured in "Lake Contour Maps" under the "Map Services/GIS" link. Another 40 lakes, including Lake Ilo (Dunn County), Lake Tewaukon (Sargent County), Alkaline Lake (Kidder County), Brush Lake (McLean County), Harmony Lake (Mercer County), Round Lake (Kidder County), and Mount Carmel Dam (Cavalier County), were surveyed last summer and will be added as full color maps upon completion.

These maps are available in large and small sizes. Large maps show contour lines, man-made features such as boat ramps, roads and camping areas, and surrounding terrain taken from aerial photographs. Small maps show the same details except surrounding terrain.

Not all of the contour maps available on the website are full color. Some are the older version black-and-white maps that lack special features. Survey work on these lakes will continue.



USFWS

WANTED: Long-billed Curlew Information

The long-billed curlew has become quite rare in North Dakota and little information is available concerning its abundance and distribution.

The long-billed curlew is a large (23 inches long) and conspicuous shorebird with a long, down-turned bill as its most distinctive feature. Curlews prefer dry habitat, native shortgrass prairie on gently rolling terrain found mostly in southwestern North Dakota.

In an effort to better understand the curlew's status and future needs, the University of North Dakota is attempting to gather accurate and up-to-date information. Here's how you can help: If you observe a curlew, note the date, county, location (distance from the nearest town, GPS coordinate, or legal description), behavior, brief description of habitat and other comments, then contact Dan Ackerman at UND by e-mail at daniel_ackerman@und.nodak.edu, or mail your findings to Dan Ackerman, University of North Dakota, Department of Biology, P.O. Box 9019, Grand Forks, N.D. 58202-9019.



GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

Power Appointed Fisheries Chief

Greg Power, 20-year fisheries biologist with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, has been named the Department's fisheries chief. Power succeeds Terry Steinwand, who took over as Game and Fish Department director January 1.



"Greg brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position," Steinwand said. "He has credibility and recognition from nationwide fisheries leaders. He'll take the fisheries of the state to the next level."

Power, management/research section supervisor for the last five years, has been instrumental in working on Missouri River issues. "He has represented North Dakota on a number of Missouri River committees, and his work is well-respected on a national level," Steinwand said.

Power is a graduate of the University of North Dakota with a bachelor's degree in fish and wildlife management and a master's degree in biology.

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

Live!

*With Radio Host Doug Leier,
Game and Fish Outreach Biologist*
Saturdays – 11 a.m. (10 a.m. mountain time)

on the following ND Clear Channel radio network stations:
 •KFGO-AM 790, Fargo •KKXL-AM 1440, Grand Forks
 •KCJB-AM 910, Minot
 •KLTC-AM 1460, Dickinson •KFJR-AM 550, Bismarck
 •KFAN-AM 1130, Twin Cities, Saturdays at 5 a.m.
 (Tape delay from previous week)

*Join Doug and guests for news and conversation that embraces
everyone with an interest in North Dakota's Outdoors.*

NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS

ON TELEVISION

Your Weekly Window on the WILD

Bismarck	KFYR	Tuesday	10 pm
Bismarck	KXMB	Sunday	10 pm
Bismarck	CATV	Saturday	Noon
Dickinson	KQCD	Tuesday	*9 pm
Dickinson	KXMA	Sunday	*9 pm
Fargo	KVRR	Sunday	9 pm
Grand Forks	WDAZ	Wednesday	5 pm
Minot	KMOT	Tuesday	10 pm
Minot	KXMC	Monday	Noon
Williston	KUMV	Tuesday	10 pm
Williston	KXMD	Monday	Noon

**Mountain time*